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on Sleep
&
Dreams -43

IV. We come now to inquire into the Cause of Dreams and of certain anomalous phenomena which occur in sleep. But before we enter upon this subject it will be proper to inquire whether Dreams are necessarily connected with sleep, or in other words whether we dream always? — This is an important Question, as it leads to a decision upon another Question equally interesting, and that is whether the Soul sleeps always. From the most careful examination I have been able to give the subject I am disposed to believe that Dreams are not necessarily connected with sleep. It is certain that labouring people dream

v who ~~[illegible]~~ live wholly upon
vegetables never dream.

but seldom, and that ~~many~~ some people passes their whole lives without dreaming. Plutarch says Cleon never dreamed. I know an instance of woman in this city of 30 years of age who assured me she did not know what a dream was. The famous pedestrian traveller Mr Stewart informed me that he never dreamed while he lived wholly upon vegetable food. Herodotus says ~~the~~ a nation called Atlantes Mr Locke mentions an instance of a young man who never dreamed until ~~a~~ after an attack of fever which was I think in the 26th year of his age. From this, and many similar facts Mr Locke infers that the soul sleeps with the body when we do not dream.. "For to what purpose says he should we

spend whole nights in thinking, and derive no advantage from our thoughts?" As an Objection to this, it may be said, that children lose all the thoughts of the first three years of their lives, and that many people derive so little advantage from their waking thoughts, that they might as well be wasted in sleep as in a waking state. In answer to the first Objection, I shall remark, that I do not admit that children waste any thoughts before they are three years old, for the whole of the interval between their birth and their 3rd year is passed, in mere animal fancy, or in learning a language, that is the connection between substances, and

If Dreams were originally, and necessarily connected with Sleep, I should be disposed to say with the poet

" How blest are they - who wake no more,
" — not so - if Dreams infest the grave,

for rise out often are ~~Sources~~ of disheping nature, and Sources of misery to us. -

signs or words. The second objection is alike futile, for if men waste their thoughts, it is no fault in the original plan of the Animal Oeconomy, for our wise Crea=tor never made any thing, not even a single thought to be wasted, or spent unprofitably upon any subject. ✓

I believe we sometimes dream, without a consciousness, or recollection of it the next day. This is ~~[illegible]~~ occasioned by the perfect sleeping state of that part of the brain in which the memory is seated, which leaves the exercises of the other faculties ~~of the mind~~ to perish in the mind.

Having rejected the opinion of the necessary existence of dreams in sleep, I proceed to remark that

We come now to inquire into the cause of Dreams, and of certain anomalous phenomena which occur in Sleep.

I shall begin this inquiry by re-asking that Dreams are morbid phenomena in the mind, and that they depend upon imperfect Sleep.

I have supposed the Sleeping point of excitement ~~in the brain~~ of the System to be at 20°. When every part of the brain, ~~that is when the blood vessels and nerves~~ and muscles responds at this point, ~~and when the~~ Sleep is perfect ~~sleep~~ ~~takes place~~ and there are no dreams. The motion however still goes on in the brain from the circulation of blood, but it is of that kind that does not produce

V We see something analogous to this in Voice and Speech. The former depends upon motions common to all animals, — the latter upon motions of a specific kind, peculiar to the human species and yet both are performed by ~~the~~ one set of organs.

thought. you will easily understand and readily admit this opinion when you recollect ~~that~~ what was said formerly of there being nerves for com=mon sensation, and nerves for con=veying ~~sensatio~~ those sensations to the brain which are the cause of perception, attached to all the senses. ~~that is the~~ we will call the common motions of the brain which take place in profound sleep ~~mechanical~~ mechanical, and those which produce thought whether in the waking state, or in the act of dreaming, we shall call intellectual or mental motions. When the excitement of the whole brain is at 20, all its motions are mechanical, but when a part of the brain is elevated above,

or reduced below that point, intellectual, or mental emotions, will take place in the parts thus elevated, or reduced. From various causes such as an uneasy ~~[illegible]~~ position in bed, too much or too little covering, too much or too little food in the stomach, unusually strong tea, or coffee, external noises, light, smells, tight liga-tures about the body, hunger-thirst, accumulated faces, or Urine the equality of excitement of the brain is destroyed. While one part remains at 20, other parts are below, or above it, and whenever this is the case exercises of the mind will take place. These exercises will be confined to the parts of the brain that are elevated above or reduced ~~above or~~ below 20, and of course they will be incoherent, or in

other words a Dream. This Dream is the result of a mental disease depending upon unequal excitement, ~~this~~ I shall here=after say all bodily diseases depend upon the same cause, and thus I hope establish the Unity of disease whether it be seated in the body or the mind. I shall only add here that during this unequal state of ~~the~~ excitement in the brain, the nerves & muscles often repose in profound sleep. The inequality of excitement which produces dreams seems to be seated chiefly in the blood vessels of the brain. They appear to be the most movable ~~part~~ part of the brain, and on their motions thought seems chiefly to depend. —

The greater the portion of the brain that is at 20 in sleep, the less ~~in~~ coherent will be our dreams, and vice versa.

They differ in their nature according to the nature of faculty ~~is awake, or~~ that is - ~~above or below~~ at or the sleeping point. Thus let us suppose the seat of the memory in the brain to be ~~at~~ about 20°:- or in a state of partial sleep, and the imagination & understanding to be awake, ~~we shall dream~~ that is above or of below 20°. we shall dream of seeing departed friends, and of conversing with them without recollecting that they are dead, although we have attended their funerals, & perhaps wept over their graves for months afterwards. The memory in this case is only partially asleep, hence we remember the person of our friends, but forget the events of their death.

2dly Let us suppose that part of the brain in which the Understanding is seated to be at 20, or in a state of profound sleep, and the other faculties of the mind to be awake, that is

above or below 20, we shall dream of the most absurd things without being conscious of it - such as being in the fire without being burnt - flying in the air, without fal=~~and walking~~ ~~upon the water~~=ling, and of possessing crowns and thrones without being born to inherit, them or without ~~or~~ possessing ambition ~~to~~ and found to ac=
=quire them by usurpation.

3 Let us suppose those parts of the brain in which the moral faculties are seated to be at 20, or in a state of profound sleep, & the seats of the other faculties to be above or below 20, or awake; we shall dream of doing ~~and~~ or saying things ~~of~~ of an im=
=moral nature at which we should shudder in ~~morstack~~ a state of complete and universal wakefulness. Pious people are often much distressed at such dreams,

but there is no more immorality in them, than there is in striking a friend in the delirium of a fever or walking in our sleep. We do not call a man's under-standing in question who dreams of being a dog or a horse — as little should we call ~~his~~ the morality of a man in question who dreams only of violating any of the divine Commandments. —

& our taste is perverted from the same causes which have been assigned for the ~~[illegible]~~ derangement of the other faculties of the mind, hence we sometimes dream of seeing our friends in the most grotesque dresses without being surprised, or offended at their impropriety or deformity.

To this remark I grant there are some exceptions in which the waking faculties perform their offices with their usual regularity & correctness. I shall take notice of these exceptions hereafter. They occur chiefly in some somnambulism.

I wish you to understand that I suppose the motions which take place in those parts of the brain which are above or below the sleeping point, to be of an irregular ~~made~~ or morbid nature, & hence arises the incoherency of dreams, or the imperfection of the exercises of those faculties of the mind which are not in a state of sleep. They resemble the ideas of persons in the delirium of a fever. They may be called delirious thoughts, while delirium may be called ~~delirious~~ dreaming words. In short - dreams may be considered as a low grade of delirium, and delirium as a high grade of dreaming. -

I think I have observed the dreams which take place when there is reason

[marks of this being real and natural. They all relate to sensible objects, and ~~par~~ particularly to the objects of vision by which sense the greatest number of our ideas are acquired]

to believe ~~[illegible]~~ any part of the brain to be below 20, to be of a more disrupting nature than when they are above it.

From the incoherency of Dreams we derive a strong argument in favor of the divine origin of those Dreams which are recorded in the old and new testaments. They are all incoherent, and their meaning unintelligible, without a subsequent explanation by the same divine influence which dictated them. Had they been intended to deceive, they would have been connected, and would not required a supernatural power to interpret them. ~~But they carry other~~

~~Thats~~ It is remarkable the

In this respect the dreams recorded in the old & new testament carry another mark of authenticity. They all consist chiefly of visible ideas, or of ideas derived from the sense of sight.

transactions of Dreams consist chiefly of visible ideas. The reason of this is obvious. We derive more of our ideas from our eyes than from any other of our senses, and perhaps from all of them, when we exclude the sense of hearing. We see a great deal more in a short time in a Dream than we are capable of seeing in a waking state. In ~~no~~ However ~~numerous~~ frequent, and extensive our Dreams may be, we never ~~were~~ dream of any thing the raw materials of which did not pass through our senses & preexist in our minds. The saying of the Schoolmen therefore is true in every state in which the mind is capable of acting "nihil est in intellectu quod

can prune fruit in Lemon". –

What has been said of the partial excitement ~~of the~~ or waking state of one of the ~~[illegible]~~ faculties of the mind that is the memory, we may explain the reason why we are able to wake at any hour we please. This is most observable when we are about setting off on a journey at an earlier hour than our usual one of rising. – It is owing ~~due~~ to the memory being kept from falling asleep by ~~the~~ strong desire to wake at the wished for hour. We learn likewise from the history of Dreams that has been given, the cause ~~[illegible]~~ why some persons compose poems, and even reason correctly in their sleep. The understanding and memory are both

~~Awake in these cases, and the act with unusual vigor. When verses are composed the memory is awake only for words.~~]—

It is remarkable that the images of things which are presented to the mind in a dream are of a more vivid nature than they are in the waking state. This is occasioned by the abstraction of impressions from all the external senses, and by the suspension of mental excitement in a part of the brain, by which means more sensorial power is concentrated in that part of the brain upon which those images are excited.

It is equally remarkable that the faculties act with more vigor in some instances in the sleeping, than in the waking state. This vigor partakes of the strength, but not of the

Recollect the fact I mentioned formerly of a gentleman in this city recollecting in a Dream that he had taken a Dose of Laudanum five & twenty years before, Although he declared the night before he took it that he had never tasted it.

irregularity of disease. I shall illustrate it in two or three of the faculties & operations of the mind.

1 The memory is sometimes so much more excited in a dream than it is in the waking state, that ideas that have apparently perished from the mind, are revived in the dream. I sailed from this city in the month of August 1766 for Edinburgh by the way of Liverpool. My brother, and a fellow graduate at the Jersey College Wm. Jon.th Smith accompanied me to the wharf where I embarked. In the summer of 1802 I dreamed that I embarked at the same wharf in order to go to Edinburgh for the purpose of prosecuting the study of medicine. The

persons of my brother and Classmate appeared to me on the same Spot on which I bid them farewell in the year 1766. Had I been asked the night before whether any other person accompanied me to the wharf besides my brother, I should have said, no. The morning after my Dream I ~~would~~ was confident ~~was qualified~~ that my friend Mr Smith was one of our Company, but to be more certain of it I called at his Door a few days afterwards & was assured by him that he perfectly recollected ~~that~~ this was the case.

But further, under this head, ideas are revived in a Dream which are not recognized, or recollected afterwards.

A Widow in the State of New Jersey was sued for a debt of £500 contracted by her husband. She believed it had been paid, but had no proof of it. She dreamed at this time that her husband appeared to her, & directed her to look into a certain drawer & that she would there find ~~the~~ a receipt for the money. She ascribed this discovery to a supernatural influence, but there is little doubt she had been told by her husband in his life time where he had lodged the receipt, and that the remembrance of it was excited by the more than common action of the on her memory in her Dream. See!

here gentlemen have ~~physiology~~ the science of the mind as a branch of physiology, corrects superstition. In rejecting this case from the list of ... let it not be supposed ..

one of them, we admit. in so doing, we reject the Bible, and renders every man ~~[illegible]~~ a channel of revelation to himself; the absurdity of

But how far ~~they~~ these dreams are to be regarded as supernatural in modern times, it is now my business to determine. There are different opinions upon this subject, and much has been said in favor of & against them: I shall not decide upon either of them

here gentlemen have ~~physiology~~ the science of the mind as a branch of physiology, cosets superstition. In ejecting this case from the list of revelations, let it not be supposed that I deny the existence of revelations in dreams in the ages of the prophets and apostles of the old & new testament. I admit them equally with the revelations which were made by signs, voices and personal interviews, but I believe they all ceased together with the lives of the apostles, and that in admitting one of them, we admit them all, & in so doing, we reject the Bible, and thus render every man ~~[illegible]~~ a channel of revelation to himself; the absurdity of

of which is too obvious to be exposed.
[This subject will occur again presently.]

2 The Understanding is sometimes
excited above par in a Dreaming hence
we hear or read of the most elevated
sentiments, and Speeches conceived, or
uttered by persons in this Sleep. Verses
have been composed in this State of the
mind. The celebrated but unfortunate
Miss Robinson saw a deranged man
from her Window in the Streets of
Bristol known by the name of
"Mad Jemmy." The Night afterwards
she took a Dose of opium, and in the
partial excitement of her mind dic-
-tated to her daughter that incom-
-parable little poem entitled the

V the impulse of the will upon the ~~Sphincter of the~~ bladder though but feebly stimulated by the Urine, and is only because the muscles of the bladder become too rigid by age for the will to move them, that ~~many~~ old people do not wet their beds ~~[illegible]~~ as often as children.

"Dramae". The next Day the had no knowledge or recollection of that elegant performance.

3 The Will acts with preternatural force in Dreams - hence ~~passions~~ through the medium of the passions and appetites; we often wake in acts of resentment, such as kicking and striking our supposed enemies. Fear, love and the Domestic Affections likewise exceed their natural force in Dreams. Children wet their beds from

4 The ~~appe~~ sexual appetite acquires strength in a Dream. This is proved by the Seminal emissions which take place in Sleep - and which never take place from the base influence of the Will in the waking State. 5 The appetite for food is often excited in a Dream

✓ especially the eyes -

~~in indecorous~~ after a hearty Supper. In this Case it exceeds in its degree the appetite of health, or of the waking State.

Nothing more occurs in the increase of the strength of the different faculties of the mind that have been mentioned, than ~~what~~ occurs in the senses. The loss or quiescence of One of them is always followed by the increase of strength in the others;- in like manner the suspension or sleep of One or more of the faculties, is followed by greater Vigor in those that are above the ~~upon~~ sleeping point. The Occlusion of all impressions upon the senses in sleep adds likewise

to the strength of the waking faculties of the mind. —

It is from the strength, and occasional Correctness of Dreams that they are sometimes mistaken for realities. Dr Currie in his medical reports relates a Case of this kind in one of his patients, who was so confident of the reality of one of his dreams that the Doctor did not contradict him lest he should offend him. Some people I believe have lost their characters for veracity by relating things as facts and within their own knowledge, that only passed through their minds in the form of a vivid and connected Dream.

However strange it may appear, it

Let the lady who is courted beware therefore
of the gentleman who professed to be
in love with her, and as a proof of it
tells her, he dreams of her every night.
He is a deceiver let him be who he will,
for he violates in this declaration a
fixed law in the oeconomy of the mind.

a curious fact that we seldom dream of persons who are most dear to us. Lovers dream of each other only in the beginning, or in the declining state of their love for each other. The late Mr Rittenhouse informed me that he was seven years under the influence of an ardent affection for a lady, and that during all that time he never once dreamed of her. The reason of this, I suppose to be the imagination and memory are so worn down by constantly thinking of the beloved object during the day, that those parts of the brain in which the memory & imagination are seated are either asleep to 20, that is the sleeping point, or if they are not, they are so completely

V their smiling, starting and crying in their Sleep.

exhausted of their excitability than the ~~idea of the~~ beloved Object has nothing in the brain to ~~assist~~ it, or to produce its idea in the mind. For the same reason, friends when seperated cannot recal the images of each other's persons. The fault lies in the imagination only, for they distinctly remember every ~~features of~~ peculiarity of their persons, are able to describe them in the most accurate manner.

Dreams are most common in the decline of life, only because sleep is more imperfect in old age than at any other time, from the weakness & diseases which attend it. They occur more frequently in sickness than in health, and from the imperfect state of sleep. young Children dream. This is ~~evident~~ inferred from the Certainty of Dreaming depends much upon the action of certain stimuli upon

the body such as ~~a full bladder, &c.~~ ~~to pass as are unary position of the body~~ were formerly mentioned. The morning light is perhaps the most fre-quent cause of them, - hence we dream most frequently about day light. Indeed there is scarcely any stimulus either external or internal so feeble that will not produce a Dream in habits induced insensible by the common modes of life among civilized nations.

The specific nature of dreams is much influenced by the nature of the stimuli which applied to the body. Hunger produces dreams of eating. It was while under the influence of hunger that the apostle Peter dreamed of seeing a sheet let down from heaven with all manner of beasts in it, and of hearing a command at the same

Dugal Stewart tells us a story of one of his ~~that~~ a friend ~~of his~~ who placed a bottle of hot water at his feet when he went to bed, and dreamed ~~dreamed~~ that he was walking upon mount Etna, and of another who while ~~with~~ a blister was drawing upon his head dreamed that he was scalped by the Indians.

time "to slay and eat"! The cold induced by a change of the weather in the night produced dreams of intense sufferings from it. The thinking of a pin thrust into the back of a pious minister by a mischievous boy made him cry out - "Oh now I know what St Paul meant by a thorn in the flesh"! — This connection of dreams with the stimuli which excite them is further and more forcibly illustrated by an anecdote related by Dr Beattie in treating upon this subject. He tells us "a young officer went through all the forms of a duel in consequence of certain ideas excited in his mind by whispering ~~an insult and~~ a challenge in his ear. He awoke at last from the explosion of a pistol which

v the Suit of impressions made upon the brain which have not completely worn themselves away before we fall asleep. & I have known a single word when strongly impressed upon the mind, become the principle of a long & interesting dream.

had been put into his hand, & which he believed he had ~~fired~~ discharged at his antagonist. —

Dreams are ~~liberates~~ further influenced by the subjects which have previously occupied the mind. Of this there are proofs in the experience of every body. By inquiry we shall find they are more or less related by former associations. They are often

Dreams are most connected when we hold conversations in them. ~~for~~ Lan=guage aects the rapidity & irregularity of our thoughts. It is probable I said formerly, the ~~incabi~~ want of language in brutes ~~which~~ renders them incapable of grasping such a number of ideas at once as to enable them to reason.

~~Persons who talk in their sleep~~
~~seldom remember their Dreams.~~

They are sometimes revived when completely forgotten by an accidental word, or an object related to them by means of association.

We are sometimes conscious of having Dreamed, ~~without~~ & feel pain or pleasure in that Consciousness without being able to recollect ~~them~~ our Dreams. This was the case with Nebuchadnezzar before the Dream that disquieted him which Daniel discovered & afterwards interpreted. Sir Thomas

Dreams may be recalled when we wish it, by retaining the same position of our bodies, and particularly of our heads in bed in which the Dreams occurred.

The oblivion of our dreams may be prevented when we wish it, by keeping our eyes shut for some time after we awake. They are oftenest remem=bered when we wake gradually.

But there are not only morbid or irregular thoughts called Dreams in Sleep, but ~~contin~~ morbid actions from a preternatural excitement in certain parts of the brain determining an in=flux of nervous power into the mus=cles of ~~in~~voluntary motion. ~~Hence~~

I said formerly that Imagination

Brown ~~was~~ in his Religio medici whose
dreams ~~which~~ were ~~Often of a Devout Nature~~ or
employed in Devotions or in Compositions ~~in which~~ of
an elevated Nature regrets very much ~~that~~
~~that~~ he could not recollect them in ~~the~~
~~morning after he awoke from~~

differed from memory in recalling
Sensations as well as Ideas. In Sleep
Dreams the strength of the imagination
goes much further — it recalls
not only sensations, but motions
which are impressed into the muscles,
and discover themselves =